



## Nord Stream Pipeline

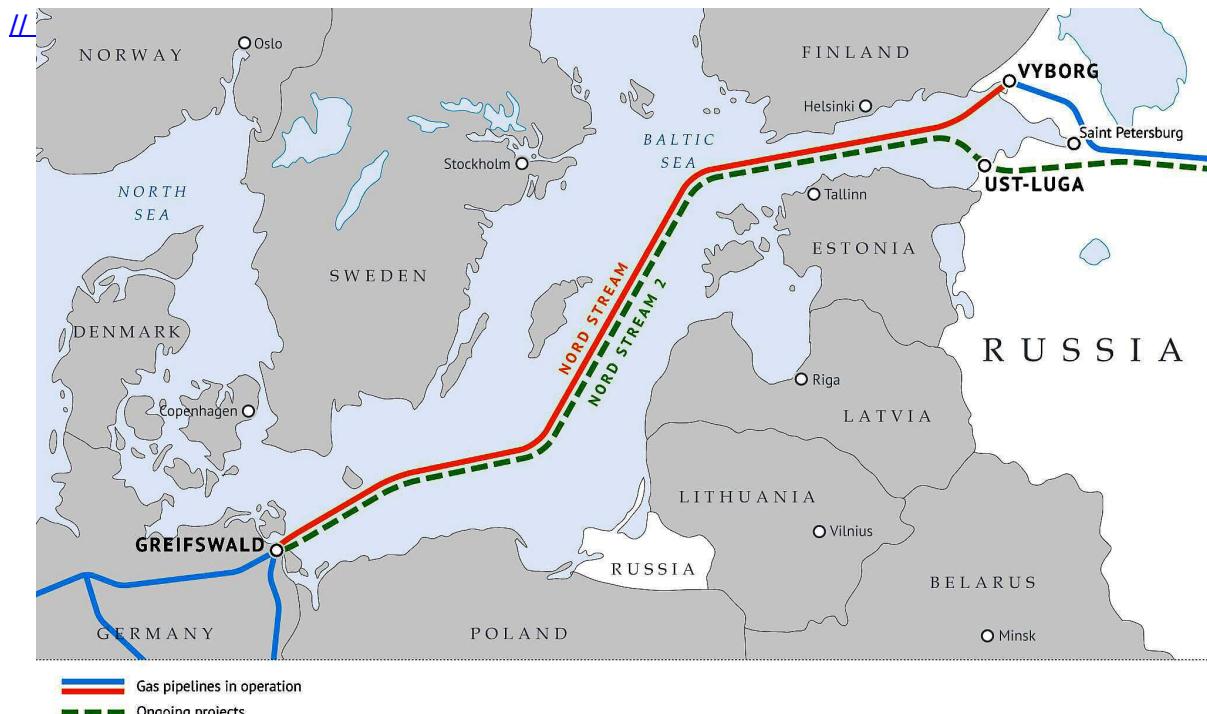
**For Prelims:** Baltic Sea and its surrounding countries.

**For Mains:** Russia-Ukraine Crisis, Nord Stream Pipeline.

### Why in News

Recently, the **US has said it will stop the Nord Stream if Russia attacks Ukraine.**

- However, European countries, led by Germany, **seemed reluctant initially to impose sanctions** on the Nord Stream due to its importance though it has now said sanctions are not off the table.
- Nord Stream, the **longest subsea pipeline**, is an **export gas pipeline** which runs under the Baltic Sea carrying gas from Russia to Europe.



### Key Points

- **About:**
  - Nord Stream consists of two pipelines, which have two lines each.
    - Nord Stream 1 was **completed in 2011** and runs **from Vyborg in Leningrad**

**(Russia) to Lubmin near Greifswald, Germany.**

- Nord Stream 2 which runs from **Ust-Luga in Leningrad to Lubmin** was completed in September 2021 and has the capacity to handle 55 billion cubic meters of gas per year once it becomes operational.
  - The twin pipelines together can transport a **combined total of 110 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas a year** to Europe for at least 50 years.
  - The Nord Stream crosses the **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)** of several countries including Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, and the territorial waters of Russia, Denmark, and Germany.
  - In Germany, the pipeline connects to the **OPAL (Baltic Sea Pipeline) and NEL (North European Pipeline)** which further connects to the **European grid**.
- **Objections to the Pipeline:**
- **By Germany:**
    - According to environmentalists, it **does not fit in with German efforts to cut dependence on fossil fuels** and fight **climate change**.
    - Nord Stream 2 has **not yet started operating** because Germany says it **does not comply with German law** and has suspended its approval. The project is also awaiting approval from the **European Commission**.
  - **Strategic Objection:**
    - The **strategic objection**, particularly from the **U**, is that it will make **Europe too dependent on Russia**, increasing Russia's influence in Europe.
      - Moreover, there is concern that **Russia could use it as a geopolitical weapon**.
    - Ukraine has objected because it will **lose around USD 2 billion in transit fees** once the pipeline becomes operational.
      - Moreover, so long as Russian gas transits through Ukraine, Russia is unlikely to intervene and cause instability in Ukraine and Europe will stay invested in its security.
    - Countries like **Poland and Belarus also stand to lose transit fees** and hence oppose the pipeline as it will bypass existing pipelines running through them.

▪ **Importance for Europe and Russia:**

- **Europe:**
  - Europe requires more than **100 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas each year** and around 40% of its gas comes from Russia.
  - Over the last few years, Europe has become more dependent on gas imports because of a decrease in domestic gas production. Reducing dependence on Russian gas is difficult as there are no easy replacements.
  - Many European businesses have large investments in Nord Stream 2 and there is pressure on governments from these businesses. Finally, a reduction in gas from Russia would increase already high gas prices and that would not be popular domestically.
- **Russia:**
  - As for Russia, which has the largest natural gas reserves in the world, around **40% of its budget comes from sales of gas and oil**.
  - Nord Stream 2 is important because it **eliminates the risks related with sending gas through transit countries**, cuts operating costs by doing away with transit fees and gives direct access to its most important European customer, Germany.
  - It increases Europe's dependence on Russia while giving it a reliable customer.

[\*\*Source: TH\*\*](#)

